

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Robert Morris vs Alabama

Friday, March 21, 2025

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Rocket Arena

Robert Morris Colonials

Andrew Toole

Amarion Dickerson

Kam Woods

Alvaro Folgueiras

Media Conference



Alabama 90, Robert Morris 81

ANDREW TOOLE: Just incredibly proud of these guys and the way they fought today, as well as the entire season. Credit Alabama for some of the plays that they were able to make down the stretch of the game.

But I think a lot of people got to understand what I've been saying all year long is the spirit and the competitiveness that these guys play with is contagious, and I think you felt that in the arena tonight. I think you saw that from the way the fans responded to them, and it's a credit to the way they approach the game, the way they perform. I'm just so proud to be associated with these guys.

Q. Amarion, a lot of headlines will be about your performance. Even though it wasn't the result you wanted, being able to close out this chapter with a loss on your home court but still playing amazing, can you speak on your performance and this team's effort?

AMARION DICKERSON: I'm grateful to, obviously, go out there and have a good game, but it don't mean as much to me, obviously, with the result we got. I go into every game, and I'm pretty sure the guys go into every game not caring about the stats, not caring about the numbers that pop up on the box score. Ultimately, we just want to win.

I'm grateful to go out there and play in front of the home court and have a good game, but I just want to play with my brothers one more time.

Q. Amarion, was there added pressure on you to take more shots and play a little bit harder today?

AMARION DICKERSON: I don't believe there was added pressure on me as far as taking more shots. Coach Toole is very confident in what we can do out there on the court. He always tells us to be aggressive. If we get a good look, let it fire. High percentage shots is what we go by at RMU, so I believe the shots I took tonight was high percentage shots, whether they fall in there or not.

Q. Kam and Alvaro, what are the emotions after this one?

KAM WOODS: Devastated. I feel like we was in the game. We had the lead up. We had the ball. I feel like that possession -- that's a possession I feel like I wish I could get back. But the fight that we had coming into here, just to be here, just to be in that game, I'm glad to have these guys with me for this run. I feel like it's all on me, and I let them down.

ALVARO FOLGUEIRAS: The emotions are like recent, so of course we don't feel good. But making the effort, looking back at the beginning of the season, we made an unbelievable run. We became a crazy team to stop. I'm just proud of my guys. Nothing special to say. Feelings are bad because nobody likes to lose. But that's pretty much it. I would love to play with the guys one more time for sure.

Q. For Kam, Alabama was the top scorer in offense in the country, but perimeter-wise, you held them to just nine fast-break points. Outside of free throws from Sears, all their guards struggled. What allowed you guys to have such a solid defensive outing against such a potent team?

KAM WOODS: Just coming in with the mindset that we could compete with anybody. We have great players. We're a mid-major team, but most of their team came from mid-majors, so we were just looking at it like that instead of playing the name on the front, just playing basketball like we're in the backyard. I felt like we did that. I felt like we had a chance. But some things went one way, and some went another, but I felt like we played our heart out today.

Q. Amarion and Kam, you guys probably had the most emotion leaving the floor, and you guys only played one year for this program. What about this program is so special to play with this program and only for one year?

AMARION DICKERSON: It's just the brotherhood and the connection. I mean, obviously, y'all are on the outside looking in and don't know what be going on at practices. You don't know the summer grind. You don't know what we had to go through to get to this point. It's just the connection and everybody sacrificing in order to ultimately win at the end of the day. I think that comes into play.

I mean, I don't know. I wish I could just play another game. That's the only thing I'm really thinking about right now, just being able to play another game with the guys.

KAM WOODS: I'd say putting that jersey on, us coming here, like I said, we was (indiscernible). I feel like we did that in a good way. I feel like these two players made a name for themselves nationwide. And for me to be an older guy, I felt like I helped lead them, and it showed in the way I gave them tips, knowing that I came from many previous schools. Just talking to them out there today and them listening, I love them guys. I'd be happy to be with them guys again.

Q. Amarion, just seeing the emotions of you guys, what's that like for you, especially to see it from the older guys like Kam?

AMARION DICKERSON: It definitely gets me emotional, like just knowing we put our all into this. Like I said, the sacrifices that we all made, and Kam being one of the leaders on the team. Just seeing Kam emotional, I want to say he made me cry. But I don't know, I feel like we're all as one for real. That emotion flowing through the team, we all feel that same type of way. That's it.

Q. Guys, I know we've talked a lot about playing in front of the home crowd and stuff, but it was a lot of Pittsburghers that came here to support you guys. What does that feel like, looking into the crowd and seeing hundreds of people here to support you guys?

ALVARO FOLGUEIRAS: Well, it feels like home for sure. It was an amazing feeling for play out there. Sadly, we didn't give them the win, but we finished the season with the head up, like men, like we've been playing all season long, and now all the country knows that we have high major pride team.

AMARION DICKERSON: Yeah, it definitely felt like we was back at Bobby Mo. I just want to give a special thanks

to everyone that came out and supported us. Without y'all, this wouldn't be what it is right now. Just awesome, just kind of mad that we didn't come out with the W.

Q. You guys talked about being proud to represent Robert Morris. Is there a point where that crowd is chanting when you guys were taking the lead or battling when you guys were down by two where it's like, it really hit you, all the support that you guys have and everyone that took the two-hour drive here to Cleveland?

AMARION DICKERSON: I would say we've been getting pretty much good support throughout the year, especially when we seen all the fans pull up at the Horizon League tournament, the support there. That was pretty unbelievable, and then just leading up to the game today, just to see everybody there, everybody at the send-off before we arrived to the arena. It's just been unbelievable support. Like I said, I want to give a special thanks to Robert Morris, all the teachers, the staff, the managers, everybody that plays a part in this. It don't go unseen, and we really appreciate y'all.

Q. Alvaro, you're only a sophomore. What do you think a game like this with national exposure can do for the program going forward?

ALVARO FOLGUEIRAS: I mean, today's game was unbelievable. I especially want to thank all the Moon Township people because I feel the love real close all season long.

Sometimes I think -- I don't know, a lot of life. I'm just 19. But something that I learned is, feels part of -- you've got to feel a part of something bigger than you. I think this is a great place to thank Coach Toole because I didn't have any question about him being the leader of the program these two years long. It doesn't matter if we were winning or losing. I just want to -- thanks to Coach Toole to give me this chance being a sophomore, being the skinny guy from Spain. He trusted me from the beginning. I just want to thank him because he's the face of our team. He's the face of this successful team.

Q. Kam, you got an opportunity to take on Alabama. What did this challenge mean for you, and how does your effort resonate now that we're in the end game here?

KAM WOODS: Just being on that court, just being on the March Madness court, don't matter who we play, we started out this year, we barely had fans at the games. We'll come out in warm-ups and there would be empty seats. We had a sold-out game. We won the regular

season. We won the postseason tournament. Just all that, not just facing Alabama, it's just going through all that. Starting from nothing, ending in something. For you to ask that question, that means something.

Just the end game, I feel like we got a good end game. Even though we're sad, that's one of the best mid-major end games of the year.

Q. Coach, you've been with this program for a while. How special is this group to you?

ANDREW TOOLE: I told them in the locker room, they're -- I'm sure I'll get some text messages about this, but the best RMU team ever put together, what they accomplished, tying the program record for wins, winning the Horizon League regular season championship, winning the post-season tournament, coming in here as a 15 seed and going toe-to-toe with Alabama, I think they're the greatest team in RMU history.

I'm proud of these guys, and obviously, we did not have a successful season last year, and so a lot of them took a chance on this program based on some of our best success, and then they brought it back to life.

I told them I'm forever indebted to them for the way that they performed and the way that they worked all year long to get us to this point, and I'll never forget that.

Q. Two questions for you: What does Robert Morris mean to you? And also, give me one word to describe the Horizon League.

ANDREW TOOLE: What does Robert Morris mean to me? They gave me a chance to be the head coach of the university at 29 years old, which most places, that doesn't happen. It's a unique place filled with special people. So the 15 years that I've been there as a head coach, 18 years overall, feel like they've gone by in a blink. Through good and bad, we've always been supported. As you saw today, the way that people came out to support this team and this program.

I'll forever be thankful for that. To me, the Horizon League is underrated. That's what I would describe it as. I think people don't understand how good a league it is, how good the coaches are, how good the players are, night in, night out, what you have to do in order to be able to win games in that league. For us to go 15-5 in the regular season and win the postseason tournament, I think is a credit to these guys because I don't think people understand how good Horizon League basketball is.

Q. What impact did you feel like Nelson had when he

came on late in the second half there?

ANDREW TOOLE: Well, the fact that he had to come on I think is a credit to these guys. We tried to put him in some actions to try to test him a little bit, but obviously, he made some plays late. His size is just hard to deal with. He's able to kind of just take up so much space out there that even when you try to get him in some screening actions or whatever, he's able to make effective plays.

But I think that was a tip of the cap moment to our team, that they felt like they had to bring him into the game.

Q. I know you talked about getting the chance to see Amarion play in his hometown, but to see him perform the way he did today and impact the game the way he did, what was that like for you in real time?

ANDREW TOOLE: I'm not surprised one bit. I've seen it all year long. I've watched it in practice. I've watched him in summer workouts and fall workouts. The guy is an ultimate competitor. These three guys up here are warriors. They absolutely play with their hearts out of their chests, and he seemed to be everywhere when we needed a play. We were down 10. He went on his little personal run there and got us back into that game, and I don't think anybody that was associated with Robert Morris basketball is surprised by it one bit, because he did it tonight.

But someone has done it all year long. Kam has had those moments. Alvaro has had those moments. DJ has had those moments. Ryan Prather, Josh Omojafo. Everybody has stepped up and made big plays, big shots for this team all year long. So tonight was Amarion's chance and he took full advantage of it, and we expected those kind of performances from these guys because that's who they are.

Q. Coach, you guys took a lead at the 7:10 mark in the second half. Talk about what happened in the last seven minutes that let Alabama pull away?

ANDREW TOOLE: Ryan had that three in that corner, man, and I thought that was going to go down. It didn't go down. They were able to get to the free-throw line a little bit there down that stretch and build that lead some.

I thought we had some good opportunities to score during that stretch and weren't able to take advantage. I thought we had a couple costly turnovers during that stretch, as well, that really fueled their ability to get out, put some pressure on us defensively.

But I think they were able to kind of use some size and strength to be able to put themselves -- put us at



disadvantage and then resulted with them getting to the free-throw line.

Q. It started with the Towson comeback, you guys were 17 points, and throughout the season, you came down from 13-plus to Northern Kentucky, Oakland, Horizon League, and then twice today, coming back from 10 points down. What about this team gave them the ability to come back with resiliency time and time again? And can you talk about the run that allowed them to take the lead? In most situations, teams would just eventually get blown out after that.

ANDREW TOOLE: Just the competitors these guys are, and we've seen it all year long. A lot of times, they're the guys that are doing the communications and some of those teammates. So we called that time-out, I think it was 12:39 to go in the game, we're down 10, and these guys are coming in like, this isn't how it's going down. That's how they've always approached it. These guys play fearlessly. I knew they were going to go out and raise their level. Anytime they've challenged each other as teammates, guys have always responded by raising their level, and today was just another example of that.

So in all these environments that we've been in all year long, when we've been down and guys were referencing it in the time-out, saying we've been here before, make a play, make a play, get a stop, find a shot, all the things they've talked about all year long. So that's been the mindset that they've walked in the door with, and that they exhibited when they touched the court.

Q. You called this team, you think they're the greatest group in RMU history. What do you want them to remember about this season going forward?

ANDREW TOOLE: I'd like them to remember that they truly became a team. I think that a lot of guys came from different backgrounds, a lot of new players on the roster. They became a team.

Like, I love teams. I've been on a team since I've been four years old, and I just love when people are willing to sacrifice in order for the greater good.

They did that, and that's more rare than it should be, I think, in this day and age. And there's so many that are looking, trying to figure out what they can get out of every situation that they're involved in instead of what they can give, and these guys gave every day. Through good and bad, through me annoying them, they gave. They gave.

They got on each other. They held each other accountable. They challenged each other. That's what

teams are supposed to be about.

That's what I hope they take away from it because they all have the ability to impact whatever environment they are in, in a positive way, and they certainly did that for me and they certainly did that for this university and they did that for each other, and I think that's pretty unique.

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